

[W. E. Oglesby]

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Folkstuff - Rangelore

Gauthier. Sheldon F.

Rangelore.

Tarrant Co. Dist,. #7

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[?] 240 [26?]

W.E. Oglesby, 75, living at 3410 Ave J Fort Worth, Texas, was born Dec 11, 1863, in Lincoln Co. Tenn. at his father's, John [?]. Oglesby, farm. John [H?]. Oglesby, with his family. joined a train of immigrants, consisting of 18 families, which came to Texas, and settled in 1872. The families of Oglesby and Jack Abner, settled in Fort Worth. The rest of the parties continued to other sections of Texas. At the time the Oglesby [family?] arrived in Fort Worth, no vacant house was available. Captain [?] allowed the family to live in his grain storage house through the winter. The first school W. E. Oglesby attended was in a building which had been a part of Army Post Fort Worth, and after which the city was named. While a young lad W.E. Oglesby traded trinkets to Indians who came to Fort Worth in large numbers. He was present and took part in the celebration held in connection with the arrival of the first railroad train in Fort Worth. He helped to raze the [?] and [?], Court House which was built [?] [Fort?] Worth. He witnessed a cowboy laso a negro and drag the man to the Trinity River and [?] left the dead body. Also, saw many cowboys at pranks when they were in town among [?] [?]. W.E Oglesby accepted a job working as a cowboy [???] ranch in 1878. While [?] on the Hop Low Ranch he took part in gun fights between

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sheep and cattle men. He still carries a bullet in his forearm received in one of the battle. After terminating his range career he entered the [????] which trade he has followed since.

[?] story of range life follows:

"I was born in Lincoln Co. Tenn, Dec 11, 1863. My father, John [H?]. Oglesby, lived on a farm and there I was born and reared until I was nine years old. [Then?] my parents moved to Texas. I have lived in Texas, since the first day I put a foot on its soil.

"It was in 1872 that the Oglesby family joined with 17 other families which constituted [?] immigrant train of 18 2 covered wagons which left for Texas.

"Most of the families were Tenn, citizens. There were a couple of the families were from Ala. Two families [o?] Johnsons were from Ala. The Tenn, folks were Jack Abner's. ____; Gray's Hugo Harrison's. Dr Miller's, Hall's, and others whose names I can't recall.

"All the people had sold more or less property and had a little money, not much, because in those days real estate did not sell for much. They all loaded their personal effects into a covered wagons and started for Texas, with high hopes to do better.

"During those days immigrant trains were compelled to meet the menace of white bandits and Indians raiders. The white bandits were interested in getting the money the immigrants had and the Indians were after anything they could get, and in some cases the scalp of the white people. Therefore, each adult, man and women, carried fire arms and a store of ammunition.

"The immigrant party organized for the trip. Some were designated to be trail leaders, some acted as scouts and some were on guard duty. There was no trouble anticipated until after we reached the Red River.

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"We met with no usual incident until we arrived at Memphis, Tenn. At Memphis we had to cross the Mississippi River and its bottom.

"The stage of the river was high and we were informed that the bottom was impassible. At Memphis the river divides and makes a complete smi [semi?] -circle. The semi-circle runs westward and and again unites with the main stream about 10 miles below. 3 We were compeled to take a boat and travel down the river, then back up the semi-circle to a landing place on the trail.

"The entire train loaded on a flat bottom boat or barge. There was not enough room on deck for all the people, stock and wagons, therefore, the 18 wagons were swung out on the side of the barge by means of cranes. The cranes were a part of the boat's equipment for the purpose of swinging wagons at the side.

"When loaded the boat presented a picturesque scene. We steamed down the river and started up the semi-circle without any trouble, and all were enjoying the experience. We had not traveled gar up the sub-stream until we struck a sand-bar and there we stayed for three days and nights.

"The boat was equipted with a fire-place for cooking purposes, so the stay did not cause any inconvience so far as eating and cooking were concerned. However, the delay caused considerable anxiety. Laterin the evening of the third day another boat came up the stream and took enough of our boat's load to enable it to float off of the bar. It was not long until we were landed and again on land.

"We then headed Southwest towards Pine Bluff Ark. We forded many streams and wee ferried across others, but had no serious trouble until we arrived at the Red River N. of Paris, Texas.

"The river was high and the ferry could take only one wagon at a time, to do the job safely. It took the ferry all day to put wagons, stock and humans on texas Texas soil. 4 Until we

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arrived in the Indian territory (now Okla) we did not see any sinister looking parties, but thereafter parties of Indians were seen frequently and then everyone became alert. The Indians never gave us any trouble, except to beg for trinkets, food, a horse and anything they trusted we might part with.

"Each night, during the entire trip, the wagons were placed in a circle when we camped and armed guards rode in the vicinity of the circle at all hours. After we begin to see Indians we doubled the night guard and everyone kept their guns at their side.

"Most of the women were fair shots. My mother was an excellent shot. She and father went hunting game regularly back in Tenn. Therefore, the women [orer?] ready to shoot in defense of the train at anytime. But, there was he accasion for using the guns on the entire trip.

Everything went well after we crossed the Red River, until we arrived on [black?] land S of Paris, Texas. There had been a three day rain and that mud was so sticky we could not travle, because it balled up on the wheels and on the animals feet till movement was impossible. We were compeled to camp in that mud for five days, before it dried so travel was possible.

"While camping in that sticky mud our worries about bandits and Indian raids were dispelled. There was a way one could travel and that was on a horse, but a horse could travel no faster than a walk. We knew that no raider was going to travel through that mudck. 5 "The last day we were camping waiting for the mud to dry, cooking became a problem. Each wagon carried/ wood for imergency purpose. but the supply gave out and we were where fuel could not be found.

"We finally arrived at Dallas and from there we traveled to axchachie and then back to Fort Worth. It was five months and 12 days after we had left [Lincoln?] co. Tenn. when we arrived.

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"My father and Jack Abner settled in Fort Worth. The rest of the party continued on and settled in various places. Dr Miller Went to [Coryell?] co. where he practised his profession for several years. Jack Abner bought 160 acres of land N.E. of town and developed a farm. The Fort Worth Cotton Mill is not located on part of the old Abner farm.

"My father was a carpenter and took up his trade here. Since he arrived in Fort Worth. in Fort Worth in 1872, there has been one family, or more/ of us living in the city and more or less of the men engaged in the carpenter trade.

"Father could not find a vacant house, of any kind, in which he could move his family when we arrived. The winter was about on us and it looked as though we would have to live in our wagon or a tent. Captain Fields owned a building in which he stored food. It was located at, what is now, the corner of [LaMar?] and Belknap streets. The floor of the building was covered with corn, but Fields told father that if he could find room enough, after moving the corn to one part of the room, he could live there temporarily. Father accepted the offer of Fields and we moved the corn to one side. then moved in using the vacant space for living purpose until Spring. 6 "There was just a few business houses in Fort Worth, at the time we arrived and they were clustered around what is now the court house square. The stockade and some of the buildings of the old fort were still standing which were located on the tract of land E. form the Criminal Court building.

"The first school I attended in Fort Worth, was held in one of the [farmer?] Fort's buildings. It was located where the Criminal Court building is [not?] located. Located at the E. end of the present County Court House, was the first Court House in Fort Worth, a temporary log building. I assisted in the work of tearing the structure down, after the permanent building was completed. That permanent structure burned in 1876. "Fort Worth was visited by many Indians in those days. The Indian trail entered town at [?] near where Taylor St. is now located and ran [N?] to Possum Ridge, that ridge of hills in N. Fort Worth. Possum Ridge was an Indian settlement covered with tepees. The Indians were moving off of the ridge when we came here and white people were settling there. The vicinity became

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known as the White Settlement. A part of the old road. H.W. of Fort Worth, is still being used and is a part of the old White Settlement Rode. Among the first families that steeled in the Possum Ridge vicinity were Jim Alford, John Ingram, ____ Grant, and three families of the ['armers?].

"I, and many [oht?] young lads, traded trinkets to the Indians who visited in town. We secured claws, horns beads and other knack-knacks. Any bright button, or other articles that would shine, would be accepted by the Indians for their wares. I still have a set of buffalo horns that I traded two bright buttons for. 7 "A peculiar trait of the Indians was the they would all disappear by dark, but would be in evidence during day-light.

"Thinking of my buffalo horns brings to my mind buffalo hides. For several months prior to the time a railroad entered Fort Worth, buffalo hunters began to transport hides here which they stored waiting for the completion of the railroad, so the hides could be shipped out of Fort Worth.

"The hides were stacked in huge piles. Where the Brown block is now located, that entire block was full of buffalo hides piled six to eight feet high.

"After the railroad entered Fort Worth, there was a continuous procession of wagon loads of hides coming into Fort Worth, from the west, during the hight of the buffalo slaughter which ended during the late 70's

"I shall never forget July 19, 1876, which was the day the first train pulled into Fort Worth. It was a day of celebration by all the people for miles around.

"The people of Fort Worth, had been under a tension for days watching the construction crews racing against time. the Legislator had made a grant of land to the road builders. The grant contained a provision requiring the road to be completed by a certain time. If my memory is correct the provision was that the road was to be completed on or before the Legislature adjourned. The regular time for adjournment had arrived with the road several

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miles E. of Fort Worth. The vote to adjourn was defeated time after time, by friends of Fort Worth, but by a close margin. The margin was so close that that the vote could possible be changed at any moment. 8 So there was an intense parliamentary battle being fought at Austin over adjournment. On the out come of the parliamentary fight hung the success of the railroad entering Fort Worth immediately. With news of the intense battle at Austin coming in each day and the [fervr?] [oxinsting?] among the workers constructing the railroad, the people were in a high state of excitement while watching the race.

“To get the train into Fort Worth, considerable of the road was of a temporaray nature. For instance, the ties and rails which crossed Sycamore Creek were laid on a crib of ties. When the train pulled in over the temporary structure it had to crawl forward slowly, to keep from jumping the track. But, the train made a successful run over the track entering Fort Worth. When it did, the pent up emotions of the people were turned loose, as onesees people give want to their feelings at a race track, when the favorite horse comes down the home stretch in a nose to nose finish.

“The whistle of the engine was tied [downnand?] blowing steadily. the bell was ringing and the people shouting loudly.

“The people for miles from the country around came to see the spectacle. Many of them [?] never seen a train before and were watching the train's movement intently.

“I was standing at the side of Prest Farmer and his wife, Merandia, when the train pulled to its stopping point. Just when the engine, with its train of three or four flat-cars and caboose came to a stop, the engine started to pop off steam. Prest Farmer grabbed his wife's arm and started running, and said. 'Hell! Maria! Marandia, that darn thing is going to blow up sure as the devil 9 has a tail'. Farmer and Merandia were not the only ones that ran, but after running a piece, and hearing nothing more than the steam popping, they all gradually edged back, and feasted their eyes on the contraption.

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"B.B. Paddock, who edited a news paper here, crawled into the engine's cab and poked wood into the fire-box, thus keeping up steam so that the whistle would continue to blow.

"With the coming of the railroad, Fort Worth soon started to grow to importance and soon was a busy stock center. Hundreds of cowhands and ranchmen were coming and going everyday. And that time Fort Worth was surrounded with cattle ranches. There were a few scattered farms, but each farmer had more or less cattle running on the open range and the small cultivated fields were fenced against the stock.

"During those days I saw some amusing incidents and some tragic affairs. I shall relate some of the events that registered on my mind.

"One of the first, if not the first, few merchants that opened a store in Fort Worth, was named Brim. He followed the Jew's custom of that day, which was to stand in front of his store and urge folks to step inside and look at his wares.

"One day two cowhands and I [?] walking past Brim's store and he became very presistent. He took hold of one of the waddies' arm and tried to lead the boy into the store. The boys refused to step in and walked on. But, an idea came to one of the boys after he had walked a short distance and the waddy said'. Let's go back and if the Jew tackles us again we'll duck him'. 10 "There was a barrel of water setting in the space between Brim's store and the adjacent building and that barrel of water was what the waddy associated with his idea. We went back and Brim was true to his trait, he tackled us again. When he did the two waddies went into action, taking hold of his collar and the seat of his pants the boys pitched him head first into the barrel of water. Then the waddies kicked the barrel over, letting the water run out, but left Brim squirming to get out of the barrel.

"Shooting out the lights of a saloon and using the bar fixtures for a target was a frequent happening. The cowboy did that to satisfy their devilment emotions and not to be destructive or vindictive. The owner of a place which was shot up could always depend on

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the boys returning to settle for the damage. The cowboys were greatly amused by seeing the people duck for cover, as a [covey?] of quails would go, when the shooting started and [?]/ amused was their purpose behind the shooting. Generally no one was hurt during the [?].

I saw one shooting deal which turned to what appeared would be serious during one of the cowboys play. There was a party of about a dozen cowboys making the round of the saloons and other places of entertainment. Among the crowd were two of the McClain boys who run a ranch near Fort Worth. That crowd were getting a little boisterous, but were not hurting anything. A policeman, who's name I forget, walked up to one of the McClain boys and insisted that they start for their camp. That demand was taken as an affront by the boys. McClain told the policeman that he was going home when he was ready, also, that he could not arrest them. 11 "The office started, what may have been a bluff, to draw his gun. When the officers hand moved toward the gun McClain hit him flush on the jaw. The blow knocked the police out and the boy took the officer's gun. When the officer's senses returned, he announced that he was going to call his associates and the sheriff for assistance and arrest McClain. The crowd of cowboys asserted that they would not allow the officers to take McClain. The cowboys mounted their horses and rode from place to place buying drinks and shooting in the air while traveling. Then they came to a place in which they could ride their horses, they rode in and insisted on being served sitting in the saddle. The boys were taunting the officer, because they were riled and wanted a fight.

"It was not long till a large crowd gathered and were following the cowboys expecting to see a gun battle, which appeared imminent. Sheriff Courtwright was seen coming towards the cowboys about 30 after the boys started to ride and shoot. The atmosphere was tense, but not for long. The sheriff walked up to McClain and told him he or his friends need not fear arrest, so long as they confined themselves to having fun without hurting anyone, but would appreciate it if they would cut their play time short under the circumstances.

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"The action of the Sheriff saved having trouble and satisfied the cowboys. The boys then headed out of town and showed their appreciation for the Sheriff's good sence, by shooting out the lights in only one block as they rode away. But, they were back the next day and settled for the lights. 12 "I was walking on Houston St. one day and saw a cowboy throw a loop around a negro's neck, then rode off at a gallop and dragging the negro at the end of his rope. He dragged the colored fellow to the Trinity river, where the light plant is now located, and dismounted. He then removed the rope from the negro's neck and rode off nonchalantly. The negro had insulted a white girl, who was known to the cowboy. I never heard of anything being done to the cowboy for his act.

"Frequently one would see a crowd of cowboys standing around an negro and shooting close to his feet, forcing the fellow to dance. I have watched some mighty fast stepping during those dances.

"It was in 1878 when I went on a ranch. I secured a job with the Hop Lowe ranch located in Jack co. and the cattle grazed in the Zeochoe Valley section section of that country. Dave Mayhorn was ranch foreman. Top-screw was what the cowhands called a foreman and Big Auger, or Bull Moose and similar terms were used when referring to the owner. Nigger Sam was our cooky and a good one. Among the steady hands were Henry and Ward Lowe, sons of the owner. There were Jack, Leon, [?] and Martin Lowe, nephews of the owner. In addition there were Jeff Bart, Bill McGonegal, Joe Jephart and 'Highpocket'. The ranch employed on an average 15 hands. We had a well constructed bunk house for sleeping quarters and a cook shack for/ our eating place.

"The food, chuck is what the cowhand called food, was plain, but well cooked. Of course, beef was the main item on the menu, beans came next, then sour-dough and corn bread and canned vegetables 13 trailed behind. Black coffee was alway made and ready for all who wanted some at any time.

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"We did night riding on the 'HL' ranch. 'HL' was what the ranch was called and it was the brand. The night riding was done in four shifts with four men to the crew. Four was enough to keep watch during the night, because the cattle always bedded down about dusk. During the day while the cattle were grazing, it required around 10 men to keep the herd together, which numbered around 5000.

"The only time we [???] trouble was before [???] [?] severe storm and in the [????] some of the cattle. All that was necessary to start a stomp from a scare was for just one or two of the animals to be scared and fear would be transmitted to the entire herd, [?] a stampede would start.

"Before a hard storm arrived the animals would become fretful and had a tendency to drift. During those times we were compeled to ride hard and steady in order to keep the herd from drifting off. We always were compeled to work the hardest during the worst weather.

"However, during the time I worked on the 'HL' ranch our worst trouble was sheepherders and sheepman who came in on the cattle range with their sheep.

"Wherever sheep graze the territory is spoiled for cattle. Cattle will not graze after sheep.

"The range was open and free, and the sheepman had a legal right to it equal with the cowmen, but when the sheepman came in 14 the ranchman instructed the waddies to shoot the sheep. Their idea was to scare the sheepemn off and prevent the range from being spoiled for cattle by sheep.

"The cowboy felt as the ranch owners did, in respect to the grazing of sheep. The dominating idea was that the cowmen came on the range first, [they?] had prior rights. We wanted the sheepman to leave with their sheep because we felt it was wrong for them to spoil the range for cattle and not because we wanted monopolize the range. Also, we knew

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there was no legal action we could take. therefore, it was [accase?] of protecting the range for cattle by the law of might in the absence of a right law.

“Lowe gave us orders, like the other ranchers gave their waddies, and we began to shoot sheep. When the sheepman discovered their sheep were being shot, they gave orders to their herders to shoot the cowboys whom they met molesting sheep. Then followed shooting which resulted in several men getting [?] and a few were killed. Then us waddies received orders to shoot every sheepman we saw, as we would shoot prairiedogs, and there was a number of sheepman killed.

The 'HL' waddies got into one of the worst battles in the [?] Valley section during those days of the sheep war in that section. We were always watching for sheepmen and of course they were watching for us. One day about 10 of us met an equal number of herders and each side open fire. It was a battle that lasted about 45 minutes and during that time everybody was doing their best and fastest shooting.

“Every one took to what ever shelter was available, behind 15 [?], sage brush or would lie flat on the ground. All men on each side were shoting at the spot where they knew an opponint was lying.

“Joe Jephart was the first one of us to get shot. He was hit in the hip, but continued to fight. Jack Lowe was the next to get hit and he received a shoulder wound, but stayed in the fight. Then it was I that received a wound. I was hit in the forearm and the bullet is still inbedded in my right arm. [?] three wounded men were bleeding profusely. Our guns and part of our clothing was covered with blood, but the excitement and anger that possessed all of us kept us in the fight. the The next fellow to get hit was Jack McConegal and the hit was fatal. He never did arise to his feet.

“While the herders were hitting us we were hitting them and to [?] extent that shortly after McConegal was killed they, that were still alive, retreated. We did not follow the herders,

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because we were anxious to have a cessation so that we could repair our injuries. After that battle the cowboys hunted sheepmen earnestly.

"It was but a short time after the 'HL' battle when the sheepmen left the [?] Valley section. They moved their sheep to the rough section of Palo Pinto Co. In Palo Pinto Co. there is considerable rough territory which is not fit for cattle, but suitable for sheep and sheep are still grazing there.

"The thing that we waddies lived in fear of every minute was the stampede. A run could be expected at any time of the night or day. However, the worst mess caused by a run that I ever watched, was a stampede by 3000 head of the Four Six cattle, which were the [urk?] [urnett?] brand.

"The herd was being driven into Fort Worth, and I happened to be gathering fire wood off of the banks of [?] Scyamore Creek. I heard the thunder of running feet and the clashing horns, and I looked to see where the noise was coming from and saw the herd coming. I was directly in its path. I started to run, to my right, at my best speed and succeeded in getting out of the herd's path by the width of a hair. If I had failed I would not be sitting here now talking about it.

"These cattle were equaling a race horse in speed. It appeared to me that the cattle were jumping twice their length with each leap. The riders were shooting their guns in the faces of the cattle and yelling their loudest, but were not accomplishing a thing. When the herd reached the creek, some crossed, some went up and others went down the stream. Most of the herd was headed towards town and became scattered in the residential district. When the animals began to run in all directions among the buildings, people ran for the houses to clear the way for the wild steers. The cowboys were one whole day getting the animals out of the district and until they did people were afraid to venture outside.

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"I terminated my range career in [?] and then entered the construction business, which business I have followed since.